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**‘Woodwork’: An Examination of the  
Evolution of a Script Over Three Drafts**

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**'Woodwork': An Examination of the  
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**Penelope Mildred Cox, B.A.**

**Report**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the University of Texas at Austin  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

**Master of Fine Arts**

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2013

# **‘Woodwork’: An Examination of the Evolution of a Script Over Three Drafts**

by

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

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This document recounts the development of my feature length horror screenplay “Woodwork,” from the conception of the idea through the completion of three separate drafts. It attempts to inform the reader of the choices made that led to the subsequent changes in each draft, as well as examining elements of the story (or backstory) that remain absent in the final draft. It also describes the evolution of myself as a writer over the nearly two-year period between first picking up this idea and finalizing a third draft for presentation to graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting.



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## Chapter One: Where I Was As A Writer

I had only written horror scripts. It was kind of my thing. A sixty-page “short” following graveyard shift fast food workers trapped in the restaurant and stalked by a cannibal killer. Half a feature detailing the adventures of four sorority sisters who get lost in the backwoods of Tennessee and run afoul of a family of deranged hillbillies warring with a busload of escaped convicts. A completed feature about summer camp counselors who unwittingly unleash the murderous spirits of the scary stories they tell around the campfire.

As a fan and viewer, I had, years earlier, come to horror by way of action films. At a certain point, I felt I had “run out” of quality action movies to rent from the aisles of Blockbuster. Stubborn and unwilling to dive into films dated much further back than the past thirty years or so, I instead took a side-step into a genre that often seemed to be nearly as exciting and action-packed as the buddy-cop, guns-blazing blockbuster spectacles that had captured me.

Horror quickly loomed large in my heart. I was engrossed in the absolute pleasure of having an entire genre of movies to mine. As I first engaged in my love affair with horror, every single film I rented was classic, better than the last. I devoured films like *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Scream*, *The Thing*, *Halloween*, *The Exorcist*, *Poltergeist*, *Friday the Thirteenth*, *Rosemary’s Baby*, *Carrie*, *Alien*, *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, and *Child’s Play*.

There were countless other hidden and not-so-hidden treasures that I coveted watching. I quickly lost the jumpy edge that once accompanied my viewings

of horror movies. Even the most basic, rote outings of killer versus teenagers captured my interest. I still don't quite know how such fare snared me so hard and fast, but I was quickly branded a horror fan for life.

I love to write very visceral scenes, to create the perfect, humming chaos of a bloody massacre, to push characters far beyond their breaking point in the face of horrific death. But horror is also light to me—almost slapstick. My goal is to make you squirm in disgust, to shock you into laughter. Horror has the power to terrify, but I've never strayed from my belief that entertainment should be the chief goal of any movie. I want to write horror that entertains, that brings you right up to the edge of the cliff and yanks you back and leaves you breathless.

I wasn't there when I started graduate school at UT-Austin. Maybe I'm not quite there even now, but it is my dream to change this genre forever. I won't stop until I achieve that dream. I won't stop even after I do.

## Chapter Two: The Conception of the Idea

The idea for 'Woodwork' was pitched in our first writing class after entering the UT-Austin MFA program for screenwriters in Fall 2011. The assignment on our first day of class was to bring in a few different loglines for projects we might be interested in pursuing that semester. During our time in that first class we were to write half a script (or more) that we would then finish over winter break, and return—completed—for use in our second semester writing workshop, which focused on full-draft revision. But on that day, the idea for 'Woodwork' was pitched by a student other than myself—my friend and peer, Alicia Choina.

Of the loglines I brought into class that first day, the idea of mine that most stuck with the small audience of listeners was a script titled 'Find, Hunt, Kill.' I envisioned it as an all-action, visual effects-laden blockbuster about a team of elite human operatives hired to board an orbiting space station penitentiary after a mass breakout of the prisoners on board—all the galaxy's worst criminals, all aliens.

As I wrote it, that script, I imagine like most scripts, underwent changes that made it both better and worse. I was frustrated with it by the end of the semester when I still felt like I hadn't quite nailed down the direction of the story, and the heavy science fiction aspect wasn't coming alive in the exciting, fun way I hoped it would. (I think there's still life in the idea—*Aliens* meets *The Rock*—but that watery half-script has been relegated to the side for now.) I struggled with the idea that I would somehow finish the script that was most often known as 'Find, Hunt, Kill'

before our revision class next semester. It felt too far gone. Instead, I found myself thinking on the idea of haunted furniture and ‘Woodwork.’

In that first class, when Alicia pitched ‘Woodwork’ (then untitled), I was drawn to my friend’s idea because it was one of the few horror concepts on the table. She envisioned it as a drama with supernatural elements, with a pair of stressed couples visiting a long-dead chairmaker’s cabin for a weekend, only to find their relationships further strained as supernatural phenomena occurs. That was the gist of the logline. I urged Alicia to write it, but while she liked the idea—it was in her wheelhouse, it was based on her own personal experience—it wasn’t her first choice of what to write and was not the idea she ended up deciding to write that semester. But the class still spent a few minutes discussing the merits of the idea.

As we hashed over the logline, Alicia’s hard gem of an idea was spun out into much more of the typical horror movie. We picked up on the profession of the chairmaker: were his chairs still in the cabin? Was it the chairs that were haunted? What if he was more generally a furnituremaker—and made all kinds of pieces that were all haunted? A haunted crib, a haunted dresser... What if they brought it back with them? This was getting too far out of hand from what Alicia had envisioned. But the direction we were driving this idea excited me immediately. Suddenly we were all discussing haunted furniture. It was a silly, strange concept, somewhat fresh, somewhat familiar.

‘Woodwork’ was the seed of an idea that I would retreat to when I was doubting my work on ‘Find, Hunt, Kill.’ Horror is my native genre, and ideas for the

script came naturally to me. More and more, the grass was looking greener on the other side. So, though we were advised against it, once the semester ended, I shelved 'Find, Hunt, Kill' and began furious work on a first draft of 'Woodwork.'

Much had happened in between that first day of class, when 'Woodwork' was pitched by Alicia, and the completion of a first draft by me at the end of our Winter Break after the first semester. A few weeks into the program, Alicia was in an accident. At the risk of overdisclosure: her bike was hit by a car, leaving her first in a coma for a period of time, then awake and on her way to recovery—with a not insignificant amount of brain damage to overcome. In one of our first real visits during her period of recovery, I remember explaining to her the several ideas she had pitched in class, including 'Woodwork.'

I had little more than a month to write a presentable screenplay. But I was excited about it, knew I could do it, and knew I had to do it. In the back of my mind, I fretted over the two people I still had to discuss my script change with. The first was Associate Professor Stuart Kelban, who had been our professor in that first semester. I worried that he would feel as though his time had been wasted helping me with the quickly-deflating 'Find, Hunt, Kill'—and he *had* warned us against changing scripts at the last moment.

I kept writing, because I had to, and because I imagined that it would be easier to ask for forgiveness instead of permission as long as I had a full, complete draft of 'Woodwork' by the time I spoke with Stuart. To my relief, when I finally approached him, his primary reaction seemed to be one of surprise that the task

was already completed—after all, in my first semester I had been one of the students stalling out when it came to sheer quantity of pages. Now I had a 112-page horror script. The only task left was one that had left me very worried: telling Alicia that I had written her movie.

As with Stuart, I somehow—and very cowardly—felt it best to complete a first draft of Alicia’s idea before speaking with her. We were great friends, but I was still paralyzed by the thought of how I would feel if someone told me that they had enjoyed one of my pitches—especially one based on personal experience—so much that they went ahead and wrote their own version of the script. My stomach was in knots for days. I was beyond fearful of the ways that this would affect our friendship. My frazzled, hectic nerves about the situation, which I can recall clearly even now, have put the nail in the coffin on ever making a mistake like that again.

Thankfully for me, Alicia is a generous friend who was excited to let the idea and her personal experience be shared and coopted by me. She felt my stark deviation from her originally-intended storyline made the script very much my own. Together, we easily settled on a title credit of “Based On An Idea By Alicia Choina.” I’m proud to have her name on there with mine, and I’m still excited to see what Alicia’s version of the script would look like if she ever decides to write her original idea of a weekend-in-a-cabin supernatural drama. At any point in time, this is never the script Alicia would have written—but it never would have gotten written without her.

### **Chapter Three: History and Backhistory**

The idea of this script about haunted furniture seemed like it would round out what I had written so far. This could be a haunted house movie without a house to be tied down to. I had enjoyed writing ghosts before and looked forward to doing so again. I began to hammer out the details of this script I would have to complete in a span of less than a month and a half.

The most basic details of this plot had already congealed in my mind. This story would be about two couples who discover a trove of antique furniture in an isolated cabin and bring it back to the big city to sell it off in the design store they own. This plot would accomplish what I felt was a key aspect of the story: bringing ancient horrors to the new world. The plot also intrinsically crafted the notion that these couples “deserved” what they got because they had taken the furniture that wasn’t theirs and hoped to use it for their own gain.

I also knew I wanted to set the script in New York City. It was the locale that made the most sense because I felt most readers would have some built-in understanding of the setting. To set the script in Memphis—if I had wanted to keep the original Tennessee locale of the chairmaker’s cabin—or Chicago, or Los Angeles, might be feasible, but would seem strange.

New York felt like the bastion of the modern world, a place almost too busy to even notice ghostly activity, let alone take it seriously. I could sink into the furniture, design, and art world aspects of the script without a second thought because those elements are understood to be part of, or exist within, New York City



society. I also liked that New York state offered centuries of historical context and plenty of rural, upstate land where I could set the backstory.

Once I knew not much more than what I described above (that the present-day story would involve two couples who own a design store in NYC), I started at the literal beginning of the story—something that’s never been explained in any draft of the script—which is thinking about where this wood came from and how it came to be “evil.”

After research, I compiled the following tale of its origin: This wood, I imagined, had been around since ancient times, or even before—back to when God cast Lucifer from Heaven. Also kicked out of Heaven were the fallen angels Lucifer had convinced into joining his faction. These fallen angels would become Lucifer’s demons. While Lucifer and all the fallen angels were expelled to Earth, where Hell was then created and Lucifer imprisoned, some of the fallen angels escaped, hiding from God in an attempt to avoid punishment.

This hiding place on Earth would have to be really good, of course. Other demons might hide in the depths of the ocean, or inside a mountain, but this one demon, I imagined, would take refuge in the heart of a massive forest. The forest would be a hundred miles or more, so vast that no person or thing would ever venture deep enough to discover this hidden lair of evil...or at least not for several millennia.

At various junctures, I imagined finding a way to layer in this story. Or even just the fact that before the Puritan settlers, there had been ancient Native American

legend of a “dark forest” or some such rumors of evil in the woods. I also looked for a way to add in the reason why I chose Chestnut, as although it’s hinted at, it’s never fully explained.

Chestnut used to dominate the forested landscape across the Northeast and Midwest United States. The vast swaths of land coated by these trees seemed, again, like a good hiding spot, but I also knew that the Chestnut blight had devastated U.S. forests in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—leaving Chestnut virtually extinct.

This too fit into my imagined history of this wood. Of course, with eternity on their side, why would God’s army of avenging angels ever stop looking for the fallen angels-turned-demons who had turned their backs on Heaven and had taken up residence on Earth? The Chestnut blight was God’s vengeance finally catching up with the demon in the forest. The only way to flush the demon out was to unleash the destructive disease—the Blight.

Perhaps the last element of this backstory that has some invisible hand of influence on the script is the strong religious element also used in the story of the furnituremaker, which I set in a Puritan settlement in America in 1700. The furnituremaker is the one who gets lost in the forest and returns with the wood that he’ll craft into the cursed furniture—wood from the domain of the demon. When the furnituremaker returns, he tells the townspeople (including the pastor and the mayor) that while he was lost, he was in “the kingdom of God.” Soon, he declares that God commanded him to build a church with the wood, and sets to work, his purpose in life found.

The reason I imagined that my furnituremaker could be so convinced that this demon was a being of light and Godliness was because, for one, the demon actually used to be such a creature, as an angel. I also imagined that divinity was blinding enough that no human might be able to decipher the intentions or alignment of such a being. The demon could wield influence far beyond mortal understanding—leading a lost, confused man further astray down the wrong path is just par for a demon’s course.

My Puritan furnituremaker I named Daniel Moribund, and imagined as a Daniel Day Lewis-meets-Jason Voorhees type—tall, handsome, dark and deadly. Though from the conception of the idea, I knew that I wanted more ghosts than just Moribund. Moribund’s village became inhabited with characters to serve as his victims: a sweet, shy wife, Abigail; the pastor’s daughter—and town seductress—Faintnot; Moribund’s own elderly mother Sarah; the two children of the town’s mayor, suspicious of Moribund; and the eager-to-believe Pastor Fowler.

Adding in Moribund himself, that totaled seven characters I could kill off into seven unique ghosts. I thought it was a good number, but later I realized it was tending toward excess. The other problem with so many ghosts was that they each needed their own piece of furniture to ‘inhabit’—and each (at least) a character in the present day to haunt. At times, putting together the script felt like moving around pieces on a chessboard. It became frustrating enough that I eventually ended up writing the 1700 scenes separately from the present day story, and fit them in after the fact, trying to space out the information for reveals when they were

needed—such as not seeing how one of the ghosts died in the past until it’s about to become relevant in the present.

Once Moribund returns home with the wood and describes his commune with God, two characters are immediately suspicious of him—Abigail, Moribund’s wife, who can sense that something’s changed him; and Aaron Goody, the pompous mayor who’s right about Moribund, but ends up looking like the man who cried wolf.

Entering Moribund’s sphere for the first time in a real way is the town’s pastor, John Fowler. Moribund’s experience in the forest transformed him into a more religious man, and the trusting, gentle pastor welcomes the woodcarver to God’s flock willingly. They grow closer as Moribund builds the church for the town. But Moribund is also growing closer with the pastor’s teenage daughter, the tempestuous Faintnot Fowler, and they begin an affair. Meanwhile, Moribund crafts several exquisite pieces of furniture for these people in his life...

In Draft One, Moribund makes Abigail a carved banister to replace the broken banister in their two-story log cabin-esque home. An end table is created for Moribund’s elderly mother Sarah so she won’t have to get out of bed to get a cup of water. Faintnot receives the present of a bureau. To punish Mayor Goody for his suspicions and accusations, Moribund makes him a secretary-style desk, and a rocking chair and a crib for his two children. What Moribund makes for himself is a massive headboard for his bed with Abigail—featuring an intricately-carved

landscape, described as how I pictured the lair of the demon: a deceptively beautiful clearing encircled by intertwining trees.

Moribund's mother is the first to die. On a night when Moribund is distracted with Faintnot in his workshed behind the house, elderly Sarah falls out of bed, hitting her head on the end table, and can't get up again. Overnight, she freezes in the winter chill. Goody is made all the more suspicious when Moribund doesn't cry at his mother's funeral. Moribund overhears the accusations, and creates the furniture for the Goody family. Soon, Goody's young daughter, Willful, dies of polio after receiving the rocking chair, and Goody's baby son dies of typhoid in his crib.

Moribund is turning darker and darker, abusing both Abigail and Faintnot. It isn't long before Faintnot tries to stand up for herself, and gets her skull cracked for her trouble. Goody is too scared of Moribund to do anything except divest himself of the "evil" desk, and give it to Pastor Fowler—thus unknowingly transferring the furniture's curse of an eternity of soul entrapment to Fowler.

The church is finally completed. Faintnot's body has been found. Abigail knows her husband did it. She finally gathers the courage to accuse him, and ends up falling down the stairs and breaking her neck. All that's left for Moribund to do is set the church on fire on Sunday morning... With townspeople trapped inside the burning church, Pastor Fowler sacrifices himself to break down the doors, dying shortly after from his terrible burns. Mayor Goody leads a mob of townspeople against Moribund. Their fitting punishment is to nail him to a Chestnut tree.

Like in the third, and most recent, draft, this backstory is spread in interstitial scenes throughout the first draft of the script. The ghosts that appear in the present look like the characters in the past at the time of their death. Faintnot has a brain-splitting head wound, Abigail suffers a lolling broken neck—and Moribund’s skin is studded with nails.

Before getting into the circumstances of the present day story, I’ll linger for a moment on the fact that two of my seven ghosts were children. I thought it made for some interesting and creepy diversity in the ghosts, but (understandably) some people didn’t like the dead children—in particular the dead baby. While the children are never seen dying in the past, one of the more potentially offensive scenes depicts the ghostly baby dead of typhoid in the haunted crib. The small twist of the scene is that the baby wakes up and begins crying, startling the modern-day character looking down into the crib, but I think the damage is already done.

It wasn’t so much to prove that I felt children should be allowed to die in horror movies (it’s all in the tone), but a child ghost ended up in every draft of this script. Mostly that was because the child ghosts (each draft featured a different one) fit nicely with the rocking chair, and the visual look of polio leg braces was creepy to me—it gives the person strange movements, relates back to wood, and polio as a disease has become archaic, tying it solidly to the past. The only other ghosts who made it through every draft were Abigail and Faintnot.

Much of the backstory remained the same throughout all three drafts.

## **Chapter Four: The Modern Day Story**

One of the ideas that initially drew me to the script was the thought that all these Puritan ghosts from a small village would be disseminated (via the furniture) across modern day New York City to all kinds of people. Having the people who bring back the furniture own a design store only dovetailed with this element—it would be easy to get this furniture out in the world, they could just sell it.

In Draft One, the store (always named Design in the Raw) was co-owned by two couples. Main characters Wes and Andy (later changed to Andrea due to complaints of gender confusion), and Wes's brother Peter and his wife Claudia. The focus of the script was on Wes and Andrea, but as I wrote, personal bias caused the script to lean slightly more on Andy's character—not least because the ending I was writing toward featured Wes becoming entranced by the furniture just as Moribund did, and therefore transforming him into an antagonist.

As the most prominent characters in all drafts, but also in Draft One, Wes and Andrea, take home Moribund's headboard. The rest of the pieces—a desk, a rocking chair, a crib, an end table, and a banister—are up for sale in the store. Here's where I reveled in the idea that I could just have characters walk into the store, buy the pieces, and then follow those people on the rest of their short lives.

The end table (and the ghost of Moribund's elderly mother Sarah) is sold to an art collector named Serena Mercer—also the only supporting character to appear in all drafts. The desk goes to an architect neighbor living in Wes and Andrea's building. The crib goes to a gruff businessman and his pregnant wife, a hated former

sorority sister of Claudia's. The rocking chair goes to a newly-divorced dad with three kids. The bureau goes to a gay Manhattanite couple. The banister is installed at the home of a Congressman and his wife.

Once Serena Mercer is killed at the Act One break, the end table ends up with Claudia and Peter—and everyone's fates are sealed. But if I had been feeling that the backstory might be a little overstuffed, I soon realized how true that was when I was bouncing from location to location, character to character, ghost to ghost. I ended up with an extremely action-heavy script, which is a tendency of mine anyway, but I knew how rough this first draft was.

The script was a bloody series of deaths, alternating between the modern day and the past. It was long for a horror script as well, clocking in at 112 pages. Another large problem was that there was no sequence in which the main characters ever really figured out what was happening to them or how to stop it. Instead, at the climax, Andrea somewhat figured it out as she went along—that the key to stopping the ghosts is in destroying the furniture. (At many points, I wondered if the mere destruction of the furniture was a satisfying solution, but I never really came up with anything better—and certainly never anything as simple. That element remained throughout all three drafts.)

I also struggled with conveying a sense of urgency—a *need* to acquire the furniture because the store was at stake. I think this was primarily a failure in the first draft. Claudia and Peter are shown to be decently financially well-off—and even Wes and Andrea aren't shown struggling to the extent they should be, although it



wouldn't make sense even if they were, because the quadruplet of store partners should be sharing equal debt. With the focus on Wes and Andrea, it was also hard to show the depth of Peter's and Claudia's emotional investment in the store.

Part of the fun was knowing that these characters took the furniture hoping it would make everything better, only for it to make everything about as bad as it could possibly get. I wanted this furniture to divide the couples, to get them to argue and doubt the otherworldliness of the furniture. This contributed to making Peter and Claudia seem less invested in the store, as I wanted Wes and Andrea to have to fight to keep their dream alive. Instead, the characters of Peter and Claudia ended up floundering and feeling lost.

It wasn't only Peter and Claudia either. The idea of the large, random group of affected characters divided pages too thinly among them all, leaving everyone feeling shallow. Of course, could I have predicted this? Probably. Screenwriting class certainly taught me better than that. I knew what I was getting myself into, but I wanted to try it, or at least see if I could get away with it.

After receiving feedback from my peers on this first draft, I knew I didn't get away with it. I didn't get away with much at all. It took a decent amount of momentum to write a script in a month and a half, but I also ran out of steam quickly. When we were reviewing the first draft in class, lecturer Beau Thorne asked me what happened to the several pieces of furniture that weren't destroyed by script's end—the ghosts were still out there. "I don't know," I offered.

There was no lack of ill-conceived supernatural logic in the pages I turned in. The feedback wasn't overly negative, but I was still compelled to use my first draft as a jumping off point to propel myself in a more extreme direction.

## **Chapter Five: A Second Draft**

The second draft of 'Woodwork' was written over the course of a semester in Beau Thorne's rewriting class. When I began writing this revision, then starting over, then starting over again, I knew I couldn't get stuck in that loop like I had with FIND, HUNT, KILL. I had to choose a single direction. I ended up with an almost 100% rewrite.

The first order of business was simplifying the story by eliminating the extraneous characters. I would cull that number of modern-day victims, and also make each of them more connected to Andrea and Wes and the store. This also meant cutting several of the ghosts and pieces of corresponding furniture.

In this new draft, Wes was now a young architect of some repute overseeing construction of a New York City skyscraper he had designed. Andrea was his loving girlfriend who ran a design store. They lived in a swanky penthouse. Claudia became Andrea's fun, single sister. Moribund's furniture was now acquired by Wes buying the land that the house was situated on in hopes of designing and building a dream home for him and Andrea.

At the Act One break, all the furniture has been found, and Wes receives a call from his firm—he's been laid off, a casualty of selling the company to an international buyer. For the rest of the script, Wes sinks into a depression from losing his job and construction on his building is halted.

The furniture that survived to a second draft included an architect's desk, haunted by Moribund and taken in by Wes in present day. Claudia takes the bureau,

haunted by Faintnot. Serena Mercer stays with the end table, haunted by Moribund's mother Sarah—but is not killed at the Act One break in this draft. The headboard (now only half-completed) ends up in Andrea's hands. Lastly, the rocking chair is bought by Wes's former boss and his wife, Morgan. The ghost haunting the rocking chair in this iteration is Moribund's own child, a daughter named Mary, who contracted polio and died from the disease in 1700.

The ghosts also function somewhat differently in this draft. As the story progresses, Claudia, Serena, and Morgan are attacked by the ghosts—and possessed, leaving them appearing to be alive, walking and talking, even though they're actually just the Puritan ghosts inhabiting the dead women's bodies.

At the halfway point, Wes's uncompleted skyscraper goes up in flames. The next day, Wes's former boss is found dead and his wife, Morgan, missing. It comes out in the news that the architecture firm was actually broke, and Wes's boss committed fraud by selling it. His death is a possible suicide, but what about the skyscraper? Andrea becomes more and more suspicious of Wes—as she should be. He's been possessed by Daniel Moribund.

In an effort to correct one of the missteps of the previous draft, I had Andrea return to Chestnut Hill for answers. There she learns that Chestnut Hill was home to an executed witch. Daniel Moribund? No, his wife Abigail. In 1700, after the death of Moribund's mother, his own daughter, and his mistress Faintnot, Abigail knew her husband was evil. Seeing that Moribund was carving a headboard for her—which,

rightfully, she took as a threat—Abigail went on the offense and killed Moribund by cleaving his face in two with his own axe.

Despite Abigail protesting her innocence, the evidence piled up against her—including for the deaths of the other three: Faintnot, Sarah, even her own young daughter—and she was burned at the stake. But Andrea knows the real truth, that the woodcarver, Daniel Moribund, is the one responsible for such crimes.

Andrea rushes home, only to be met by Wes...and the headboard. He's finished carving it for her. Since the piece hadn't been completed, Abigail's sacrifice was not for nothing—she escaped eternal damnation. Wes, possessed by Moribund, wants to ensure that Andrea won't be so lucky. Once the headboard is hers, death will seal her soul to the woodwork, and Wes will be the one to kill her.

As the script moves into its third act, Wes rounds up the ghost-possessed women along with hostage Andrea, and returns to Moribund's house, where he's going to kill Andrea in the observation tower as a sacrifice to the demon in the forest. Of course, she ends up escaping his clutches, burning down the observation tower, then cleaving Wes's face in two. Even more than the first draft, Andrea was becoming very linked with the character of Abigail Moribund.

However, in an effort to slash page count, I eliminated a large amount of the backstory, keeping it contained to quick, wordless flashbacks. After further review upon gaining distance from the script, the flashbacks I included aren't extensive enough to get across the gist of the backstory. To any new reader, they likely add more confusion than clarity. Several of the ghost characters are even left unnamed.

‘Woodwork’ became a much shorter script, which I wanted. It also became much more character-focused, which I wanted. But I ended up unhappy with the ways in which both of those things happened. I lost what I thought was a cool backstory with characters that interested me—and a pretty necessary explanation for the comedic-leaning premise of “haunted furniture.” Not perfect, certainly, but I still think the backstory might be one of the best parts of the first and third drafts of the script.

Surely, one of the changes I made for the worse was the total erasure of the store’s money issue. I suppose it was purely reactionary, but I was so frustrated at the problems I was running into regarding the stakes of the store and necessity of the money that Wes and Andrea ended up somewhat wealthy in this second draft. Or Wes was at least—the root of any money issues in this draft stemmed from the fact that Wes was the clear breadwinner, which I also tried to use to show the upset of their dynamic when Wes loses his job, and as he becomes more and more like Moribund.

The penthouse proved to be no more interesting a setting than the somewhat generic apartment where Wes and Andrea reside in Draft One (and which makes a reappearance as the living quarters in Draft Three). I created just as many problems for myself by making my characters wealthy. I felt like I had to spend an inordinate amount of time setting up the circumstances of their lives.

I also neglected—again—to destroy all the furniture by script’s end.

## **Chapter Six: A Break from ‘Woodwork’**

While I had struggled to finish Draft One due to the time crunch, I struggled with Draft Two because I felt it spiraling out of control as I wrote it. In some ways, it was an improvement, but diverged too sharply from the idea that had excited me, and the story I wanted to write.

Woodwork sat idle for a year. I was happy to gain distance from it. I went to Los Angeles that summer. I worked hard at my internship, wrote up a second draft of a pilot I had written, and outlined another horror feature. Fall crept up quickly. I was determined to go into my second and final year with a clear vision of the scripts I would write so I could churn them out without doubting myself, without stopping, without starting over.

My plan was to spend the Fall semester working on a script I knew I might face a few challenges with, and spend the Spring semester working on a gory polar bear creature feature—an idea I had pitched to positive response back on the first day of school, the same day I heard the idea for ‘Woodwork.’ I had a solid plot structure in place for my polar bear script already. It was bloody and action-packed and I knew I could crank out a decent draft from the outlining I had already done—I planned to take it easy in the Spring semester with this script.

While in Los Angeles, I had been researching the idea I hoped to write in the Fall semester. It was going to be a period piece set in mid-1880s Austin, Texas, when the burgeoning town was terrorized by a pre-Jack the Ripper serial killer targeting

lower-class women. I had so enjoyed the period aspect of 'Woodwork's' first draft and looked forward to writing an entire period-set horror script.

Even more than that, I just felt extremely energized by the story of this killer—coined the 'Servant Girl Annihilator' by then-Austinite O. Henry. I imagined an Austin struggling with its Wild West roots and the competing desire to grow into a more influential city to meet the 20<sup>th</sup> century head on. Class dissent exploded with the arrival of the Annihilator. He preyed solely on lower-status women, but (like the Ripper) a certain amount of medical expertise seemed to lend credence to the theory that the killer was a member of the upper-class.

The upper class was subsequently accused of not much concerning themselves with the killing spree, as their women appeared to be in no danger. Around the same time, the Austin Moon Towers were installed as a way to light the streets for safety. My script would have revolved around the efforts of the Austin police to stop the murders, focusing on the class tensions exacerbated by the Annihilator. All of Austin would be brought to the precipice of ruin due to the horrors perpetuated by a killer choosing to walk the line between the upper- and lower-classes to turn the city against itself.

Not far into my plotting and research, I was informed by Stuart Kelban that a script on the same subject (or at least the same killer) had been penned by former M.F.A. students Brian McGreevy and Lee Shipman—and that, if he was recalling correctly, it was the script that propelled them to their current successes.



I abandoned the idea. I haven't read their take, but I'm sure it's great. Likely better than anything I could write right now. But give me a couple years to catch up, to become a better writer, for their script to sink from memory—and then I'll annihilate them with a version of my own.

What I wrote instead in Fall of 2012 was my polar bear creature feature, which ended up being titled 'Dead Meat.' I steamrolled through a fun first draft with relative ease. It was far from perfect, but it was certainly better than the second draft of 'Woodwork' I had ended up with the previous spring.

But when it came to Spring of 2013, I didn't know what to write. I had plenty of ideas—still do—but none seemed a good fit for my last semester. I yearned to branch out from horror. I knew this had ultimately gotten me in trouble with 'Find, Hunt, Kill,' but as much as I loved horror, I already knew it wouldn't be the only thing I ever wrote. My interests are more diverse than that.

For the Spring of 2013, I settled on the idea that I wanted to write an action-adventure film. I felt confident with action writing and hoped that if I stayed away from science-fiction, I might be able to avoid some of the difficulties I had faced with 'Find, Hunt, Kill.' But while I knew I wanted to write an action-adventure in the vein of movies like the *Indiana Jones* series and *The Mummy*, that was about as much as I had—and Spring was coming up fast. I discussed this all with fellow classmate, close friend, and current roommate Steve Stringer one day during one of our hours-long brainstorming sessions over cheap beers and Austin's best tacos, and asked if he had any thoughts for an action adventure script.

The first words out of his mouth were: “The Secret Adventures of Amelia Earhart.” I laughed him off. We moved off the subject, and he left shortly after. By the time he left, I was already coming around to the idea. I thought about it all night. By the time I woke up in the morning, I saw it clearly for the brilliant idea it was. Encouraged by Steve, ‘The Secret Adventures of Amelia Earhart’ became my next script.

‘The Secret Adventures of Amelia Earhart’ followed a young Earhart as the U.S. government recruits her to be a spy in WWII-torn Europe, where she runs afoul of an eccentric Italian flying ace and his elite team of Mussolini’s Blackshirts after she follows them cross-continent and discovers their plot to terrorize the U.S. from the skies.

All along, I knew I would have to come back to ‘Woodwork’ sometime. It was my problem child. (The incomplete ‘Find, Hunt, Kill’ has mostly sunk into idea non grata for now.) I think I always knew ‘Woodwork’ would be the script I returned to in order to complete my M.F.A. report. I refused to leave school as unhappy with a complete script as I was with ‘Woodwork.’

## Chapter Seven: A Third Draft

‘Woodwork’ had not completely escaped my thoughts—even if I had sometimes wanted it to. As an idea, I think there’s something there, but not everyone responds to “haunted furniture.” I knew it was somewhat of an original conceit, or at least exploited the idea and placed it center stage to an extent I had never seen in another script. I also liked the Puritan setting—like “haunted furniture,” it felt fresh but familiar.

I knew my first draft had extensive problems, but at its core was the story I wanted to tell. Draft Two was improved by being more character- and plot-focused, but not with characters and a plot I wanted to focus on. This third draft would be a merger of the two drafts—the spirit of the first, and the sensibility of the second.

Moribund’s story could remain relatively the same. One of the few ideas that had taken root in my mind during my year’s break from ‘Woodwork’ was that, like the second draft, Abigail would be the one ultimately accused of Moribund’s crimes—but like Moribund in the first draft, Abigail’s punishment would consist of nailing her to the tree. Abigail took on the features of First Draft Moribund with the nails pounded into her skin. Moribund kept his appearance from the second draft—his face cleaved in two by Abigail with an axe. In the first draft, Abigail falls down the stairs and breaks her neck. This death I gave to Faintnot in Draft Three—along with keeping the cracked skull Moribund gives her to finish her off in Draft One.

The child ghost in this draft harkens back to the original draft as well. Instead of Goody’s two (mostly non-character) children becoming ghosts, Goody now only

has a preadolescent son I've tried to insert into the backstory in a more meaningful way. The challenges in killing a kid were still present—so I tried to make Goody's son, Samuel, an unlikable brat.

Unlike the first draft, where we learn of Goody's children's deaths in a later scene, I included the scene of Samuel's funeral. Here, I also made a decision that I'm not sure holds up as well as the take in Draft One. I killed Goody (from a heart attack) at his son's funeral. I think it works pretty well in the script, but where it becomes a problem is in the final pages. In Draft One, the backstory ends with Goody organizing a mob against Moribund and dragging him out of his home to nail him to the tree. In Draft Three, with Goody already dead, the mob is left a faceless, characterless group of enraged townspeople, leaving Abigail to be killed by nobodies in the end.

Like the second draft, I also don't think I've quite ironed out the scenes in which Andrea returns to Chestnut Hill in order to find out more about Moribund and the furniture—specifically, the scenes in the Chestnut Hill Historical Society. The lack of any such scenes in Draft One was very problematic. These discovery and explanation scenes fall flat in Draft Two. In Draft Three, I think I've brought these scenes closer to working—but they may still need an entire retooling. I may just need to find a completely different way for Andrea to uncover the truth behind what's happening.

The character of Hadley James in this draft is more or less Serena Mercer, only with a different name. After reviewing Draft One, I noticed a pattern in the

names of my female characters: Andrea, Claudia, Serena, Veronica (the Congressman's wife). Veronica was already long gone, I was pretty settled on the name Andrea, and I never found an alternate name for Claudia I was satisfied with, so I knew it was Serena's name that had to change. It's small, but I think 'Hadley James' is an improvement.

Another small improvement I was able to implement was locating Andrea and Wes's apartment directly above their store. Readers may have to suspend a modicum of disbelief where this is concerned—but I think it ultimately works to tie two once-disparate locations together, and makes things easier in the climax, when both the store and the apartment needed to be under attack from the ghosts residing there.

Missing from Draft Two, but present in Draft One, I brought the character of Claudia's husband Peter back into the fold. I subsequently aged Claudia up a bit again, as in the first draft. I still think both Peter and Claudia need to be made more integral to the plot, and they feel somewhat like placeholders for now, without any real story of their own. As from the second draft, I kept Claudia as Andrea's sister—since it always worked much better than the relatively non-existent bond between brothers Wes and Peter in Draft One.

Also returning to the first draft, the acquisition of the furniture came from a weekend vacation upstate—instead of Wes's second draft, ham-fisted estate purchase. In the first draft, I had the quartet bargain with the manager of the resort on a price for the furniture. Of course, the price is an absolute steal, Wes and Andrea

practically getting away with murder. I always knew it would be smoother if they could somehow just find the furniture and take it—no negotiation required, and it would further solidify the ‘original sin’ that leads the characters to ‘deserve’ what’s coming to them. For that to happen, I had to change the way that Wes and Andrea discover the furniture. It couldn’t just be the furniture decorating the house, or in a shed or observation tower out back—the furniture had to be hidden. I finally settled on Moribund using a hidden workshop cellar to store the furniture. I think this script device helps settle some of the issues I was hoping to solve, but whether it works smoothly in conjunction with the story—I’d say it’s about a wash compared with the shed from the first draft.

I also cultivated several of my favorite deaths and action moments from both scripts to fold into this third draft. For example, in Draft One, broken-necked and bruised Abigail terrorizes a Congressman’s wife after they bring home Moribund’s banister. Also in Draft One, Claudia takes home the end table and eventually dies at the hands of Moribund’s ghostly mother Sarah. In Draft Two, Claudia takes the bureau and is possessed by Faintnot. For Draft Three, Claudia’s death is combination of all three of these scenes. She takes the bureau and is haunted by broken-necked Faintnot before being attacked in the same manner as she was in Draft One by Sarah, then eventually dying in the same way (falling down the stairs) as the Congressman’s wife from Draft One (and, tying the past to the present, the way Draft Three Faintnot is killed in 1700). Creating a merger of Drafts One and Two became even more literal than I had intended.

About 60-70% of the backstory is the same as in the original draft, though the text underwent significant tweaking to add the character of Samuel Goody, change Moribund's workshop location to the house's cellar, and alter the deaths of Faintnot, Abigail, and Moribund. The interstitial flashback scenes to Moribund's era are doled out throughout the script in much the same manner as they were dispersed throughout the first draft. While I believe these scenes are effective, they do end up co-opting a major chunk of the script—as they did in Draft One. I also don't think they're spread out evenly enough. I look forward to taking another pass at this script, evaluating the overall worth of the backstory to the script, culling some of these scenes, and finding the best placement for each 'flashback' segment.

From there, it's difficult to discern how much of the first and second drafts made it into the third draft. Almost every word was rewritten, save for the backstory. In the present day story, I'd estimate that only around 5% of the text remains from either of the previous drafts. There are many movements in the story, however, that closely follow the structure of Draft One. Though while Draft Three may more resemble Draft One, I couldn't have gained the (relative) clarity of the characters and simplicity of the story in Draft Three without the work I did with Draft Two. With two such distinct drafts, I was able to see the elements of the script that needed to be present for Draft Three.

With Draft Two, I had already come to the realization that the lynchpin of the entire script—as with almost any script—was the relationship between the main characters. That was Wes and Andrea. While they were hardly present more than

any of the other characters in Draft One, I made Wes and Andrea the sharp focus of Draft Two. In Draft Two, I hoped to create a complex history for this couple that could be exploited once the furniture arrived and started to drive a wedge between them. In both drafts, Wes slowly became obsessed with the furniture, becoming more and more Moribund-esque. The end of the first draft featured Andrea badly injuring Wes as he tries to attack her, but he escapes and disappears into Moribund's furniture—presumably in search of more demon-infested Chestnut. The second draft took this to new heights: Wes was visibly possessed by Moribund's ghosts and he brought Andrea (and his other possessed victims, Claudia, Serena, and Morgan) to Chestnut Hill to kill her as a sacrifice. At the climax, Andrea ended up killing him with an axe to the face.

I included it twice, but there was always something I didn't like about Wes becoming possessed by Moribund. In Draft One, none of the other characters were 'possessed' by the furniture in a similar way. As a way to combat this, I moved in the opposite direction and had every victim become possessed in Draft Two. With Draft Three, I tried a different approach.

I knew Wes and Andrea at to be at odds throughout this script—it paralleled nicely with the backstory, and gave my characters something to deal with that could be made worse by the addition of the furniture. Andrea's choices also ended up boiling down to saving the store or saving her relationship, and I liked those stakes. So I wrote a different version of Wes and Andrea's relationship for Draft Three, one where they broke up at the end of Act Two, one where their relationship was rocky



from the start—and the ensuing problems with the furniture was just the push off the cliff.

While I think this version works, character is still not my strong suit. Most of the Wes and Andrea scenes are just fights between them. I'd like to look at this relationship again when I have a bit more distance from the script and see if this move I've made in Draft Three is really a step in the right direction. While I like that Wes doesn't become possessed, it somewhat diminishes the importance of Moribund's ghost, when he should be of equal (if not more) prominence to Abigail's ghost.

All in all, I shouldn't be shocked to feel that this draft is an improvement. That is, of course, the point of revision. In attempting to start this third draft, I did experience some of the same wheel-spinning that kept me in place when working on 'Find, Hunt, Kill,' the first revision of this script, and (to some extent) 'Amelia.' I still struggle with the vast amount of choices to be made in a single script, wondering if I'm making the right decisions on everything from character to setting to structure to action to dialogue to theme. Three drafts in on 'Woodwork,' I see that finishing a script you can be happy with is more of a vertical climb than a horizontal sprint. You build upwards on the solid foundation you already have, instead of spreading yourself out in all directions.

'Woodwork' might finally have a solid foundation. I hope I can build it into something even greater.

## **Chapter Eight: Post-Script**

‘Woodwork’ has been a part of my life at UT-Austin since the literal Day One. I’ve worked on it far more (and far longer) than any other writing project I’ve completed. I know I’ll return to it again—I know I need to, to improve it even further, to make all the time I’ve already put into it worth something. Story aside, it’s evident that my writing has improved from draft to draft to draft, which itself is reason for this latest iteration to be the best ‘Woodwork’ script yet.

I’d say that I think I’m a better writer than anything I’ve written, but a writer can only be as good as their best work. ‘Woodwork’ may not be my best work, but it has been my hardest-won. For now I feel satisfied, but soon I’ll have to improve ‘Woodwork’ because I’ll have improved as a writer.

Graduate school has afforded me the unique opportunity to learn more about myself as a writer than I ever would have otherwise. Seeing my scripts against the scripts of my classmates’ and seeing how each of us chose a particular path to follow in the series of scripts we wrote helped me to pinpoint the problem areas that were uniquely my own—and to discover the strengths my talent possessed.

I still treasure the horror genre, but my schooling has illuminated the similarities that should be present in every type of script. I’ve been reluctant to test the waters outside my comfort zone, but have become more excited about the ideas I have for scripts in many different genres and styles. For my next script, however, I’m going to continue working on ‘The Secret Adventures of Amelia Earhart.’ Like I learned with ‘Woodwork,’ it’s better to build yourself up than spread yourself out.

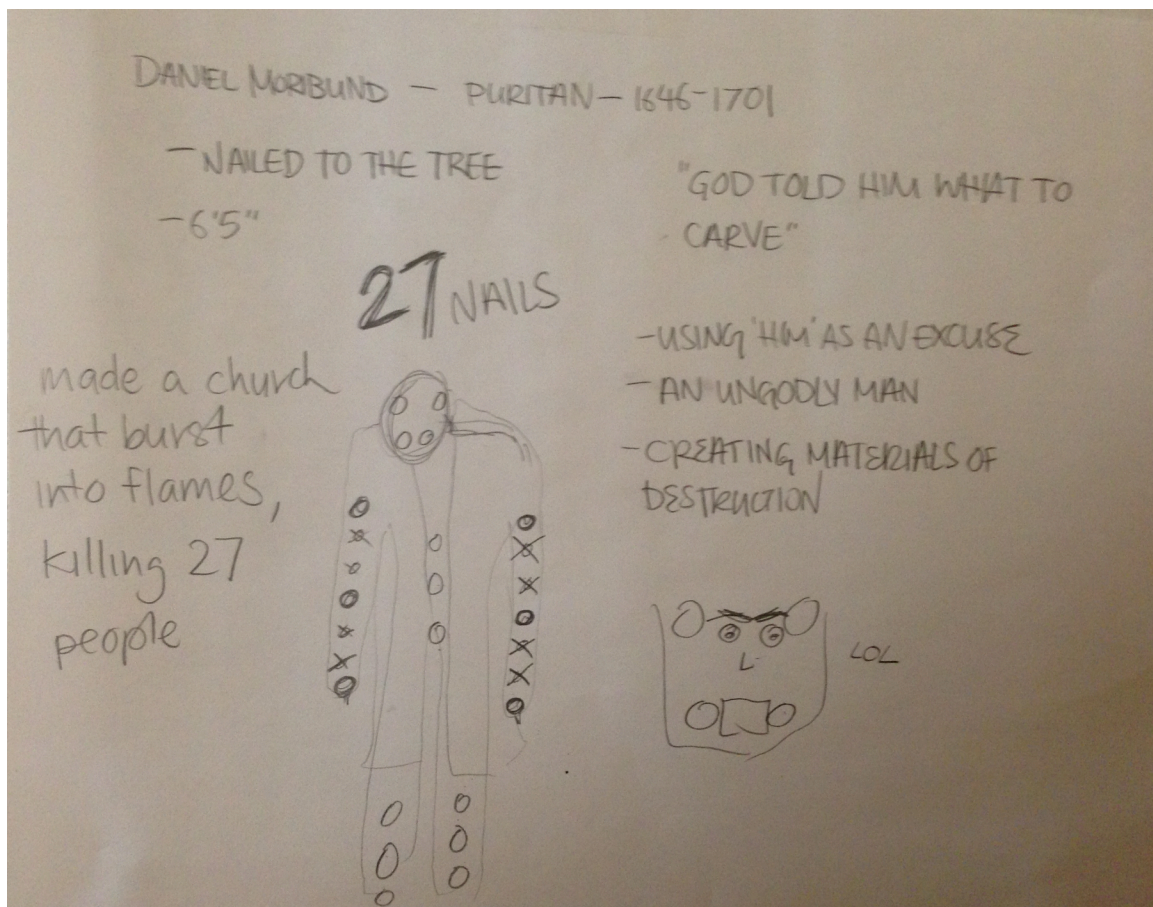
The action-adventure of 'Amelia' is still a departure from what I consider my forte in horror, but I think 'Amelia' has the most potential of all my work. I hope to make this script as great as it deserves to be.

Writing has meant everything to me. I have often been scared by the fact that there are so many others who feel the same way I do about that same seemingly unattainable thing that I strive for, but I cannot let myself go. I don't think I'll ever be able to let myself go. Writing is the only way. Writing is it. Write or die.

No, that's not a suicide note.

It's a celebration.

## Appendix A: Selection of Handwritten Notes (Pre-Draft One)



## DESIGN IN THE RAW

- BROTHERS
- ANDREA, 25  
~~~~~ 2 YRS
  - WES, 27 - carpentry
  - CLAUDIA 28 - interior design, ~~~~~ 5 YRS  
MARRIED
  - PETER 29 - carpentry/business

DANIEL MORIBUND 1842-1897

WITCH; HUNG BY A LYNCH MOB FROM THE MASSIVE TREE IN  
HIS FRONT YARD

CHESTNUT - BLIGHT IN LATE 1800s

- WOOD COFFIN? - BURIED UNDER TREE ... WHICH SPROUTS OUT OF HIS COFFIN
- CHESTNUT GROVE AROUND THE CABIN



## Appendix B: Notes on Placement of the Backstory (Draft One)

1-2 (1): The search party. Moribund coming out of the forest with wood. Abigail arrives. Pastor Fowler is excited. Mayor Goody is suspicious. STRANGE  
8-9 (8): Moribund comes home. He greets his wife and his mother. He starts carving the banister. (1)  
20-22 (17/11): Moribund tells the Pastor about his idea to build a church. He sees sexy Faintnot. (2)  
26-27 (30): Moribund hears a creak...his mother out of bed and cold. He says he'll make her an end table. See the banister here. (3)  
40: Winter's approaching. Moribund is building the church. Faintnot approaches him and asks him about a table. Goody harasses them. (4)  
54: Moribund has an affair with Faintnot. He gets home and Abigail is suspicious. He hits her. His mother falls out of bed and dies...see end table. (5)  
66: Moribund walks in on Goody talking to Fowler about him. He then fights with Goody, who calls him a blasphemer, citing some incident from his mother's funeral. See desk here. (6)  
78: Moribund gives Goody's kids Christmas gifts--meet polio-riddled Willful and Baby Thomas. (7)

Moribund returns from the sacred grove with more wood, only to face a livid Goody. His children are dead. (8)  
He abuses Faintnot during sex and she tries to break it off with him. She tells him that she'll expose him to her father and she's tired of the abuse. He strangles her to death on the dining room table. (9)  
Abigail confronts Moribund about Faintnot's death--she was found in the woods, strangled, and Abigail has long suspected an affair between them. He pushes her down the stairs, breaking her neck. (10)  
Moribund doubles his efforts on the church, finally finishing it. The Pastor holds services there, and as the congregation gathers there, he completes work on the headboard. He lies down in bed, arms out like Jesus on the cross as the church bursts into flames and falls apart, killing those inside. POSSESSED  
Goody and a few others rush to Moribund's house for retribution. Breaking inside, they find Abigail dead. They accuse Moribund of witchcraft, haul him outside, and nail him to the tree outside, with one nail for each of the people he's killed. POSS.

- 1 Moribund returns; reunites with Abigail; says he found treasure 1
- 2 Moribund goes home for the first time; sees mother; WANTS TO MAKE BANISTER 6
- 3 Talks to Fowler; meets Faintnot; WANTS TO BUILD CHURCH 13/16/17
- 4 SEE BANISTER; talk to mother; WANTS TO BUILD BANISTER 22/23
- 5 Faintnot shows up at the church site 28
- 6 Faintnot and Moribund begin affair; WANTS BUREAU; Sarah Brady DIES; SEE END TABLE 32
- 7 Goody talks to Fowler about Moribund; who catches them; SEE BUREAU; WANTS TO BUILD DESK, CHAIR, CRIB 37
- 8 Moribund gives gifts; SEE DESK, CHAIR, CRIB 42 (trans INTO Dean) 42
- 9 Moribund returns; Goody confronts him about his kids' deaths 47
- 10 Faintnot breaks off their affair; he kills her 51 (door blows, moribund pounding into her?)
- 11 Goody tries to convince Fowler; he takes desk; Goody forms mob 55
- 12 Abigail questions him; he kills her 60
- NO 13
- 14 Church goes up in flames; Fowler dies
- 15 Goody and mob kill Moribund

## Appendix C: Partial Scene Breakdown Color-Coded by Character (Draft One)

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Daniel Moribund comes out of the woods just as his search party sets off.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |               |
| Andy works the register at Design in the Raw<br>Peter and Claudia arrive.<br>Andy locks up the store.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |               |
| The car driving upstate.<br>Andy sees the Chestnut Hill sign.<br>The car parked outside the resort.<br>They find out the resort was overbooked.<br>They drive to the old cabin.<br>Peter scopes out the Chestnut tree.<br>Moribund returns home, reunited with his wife Abigail and his mother Sarah.<br>He begins carving the banister for Abigail.<br>Everyone enters the cabin and finds the furniture.<br>Wes and Andy discover the headboard upstairs.<br>Wes looks at the ring in the bathroom and hears noises in the hall.<br>He enters the bedroom and finds Andy, hands on the headboard.<br>Downstairs, Peter sleepwalks and covers up all the furniture.<br>The furniture uncovers itself.<br>Moribund tells Pastor Fowler about his plan to build the church and notices the Pastor's sexy teenage daughter Faintnot.<br>They drive back to the lodge.<br>They strike a deal with the resort manager for the furniture.<br>Dean arrives with the truck.<br>They take the furniture out of the house.<br>They leave, bidding goodbye to helpful employee Lyle.<br>Wes, Andy, and Dean drive the truck back. |               |
| The three of them park the truck and walk home together.<br>They talk in the walkup staircase.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |               |
| Wes and Andy enter.<br>Andy thinks the headboard would look good in the bedroom.<br>Wes brushes his teeth and Andy startles him in the hall.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |               |
| Sarah Brady complains of being cold and Moribund starts to make her an end table so she doesn't have to get out of bed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |
| Wes puts the end table in the front window.<br>The nails spill everywhere in the workshop.<br>Serena enters, discusses the end table.<br>Wes and Andy show Serena the other furniture and strike the deal.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |               |
| Wes and Andy admire the invitation to the show.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |               |
| Moribund works to build the church. Faintnot Fowler approaches him, flirts, and asks for a table. Mayor Goody harasses the two of them as ungodly.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Andy/Wes      |
| The showing is about to start, Serena opens the doors. They meet Maureen. Dean comes by and fights for the desk. Richard and Veronica buy the banister.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Claudia/Peter |
| The people that bought the furniture wait to pay. Meet Marcus, Talon, and the Pritchetts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Maureen/Cal   |
| Wes proposes to Andy at an Italian restaurant.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Pritchetts'   |
| They walk toward the store.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Marcus/Talon  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Ralstons'     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Dean          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | DITR          |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | NYC           |
| He surprises her with a rendezvous in the workshop and has bought the headboard.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Chestnut Hill |
| Moribund has an affair with Faintnot.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | C.H. 1700     |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| He gets home late and hits his suspicious wife.<br>His mother falls out of bed and freezes to death.                                                                                                                                                     |
| Serena comes into the store for her end table.<br>Serena gets hit by the car.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Wes installs the headboard and comforts Andy.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Peter and Claudia close the workshop. She gets the splinter.<br>Peter talks to the police.                                                                                                                                                               |
| Peter puts the end table next to the couch.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Andy and Wes decide to do a movie night.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Peter wakes from the couch; Claudia's breath is visible.<br>Peter hears a thump in the kitchen.<br>He sees Claudia is alright.<br>He takes Claudia into the bedroom; ghost on the bed.                                                                   |
| Footsteps outside Wes and Andy's bedroom. The bed is pulled out from the wall,<br>screws fall out.<br>Andy startles awake.                                                                                                                               |
| The ghosts cause mayhem in the workshop; carve 'Blasphemer.'<br>Wes and Peter get ready for their long day.<br>They discover 'Blasphemer.'                                                                                                               |
| Goody talks to Pastor Fowler about Moribund, and Moribund walks in on them to<br>give Fowler the table. Moribund and Goody fight.                                                                                                                        |
| Wes and Peter arrive at the Ralstons, talking to Andy on the phone.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Andy sees the 'Blasphemer.' Marcus and Talon arrive.<br>The men offer to take the table themselves.<br>Andy struggles to hide the graffiti.                                                                                                              |
| The banister is installed at the Ralstons'.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Wes and Pete return and load up the crib and rocking chair.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Claudia lies on the couch; her water turns solid.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Wes and Peter drive away from Maureen's.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Wes leaves Pete in the Pritchetts' garage.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Wes meets Derrick and Sophia.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Dean's working hard...crumples it up, starts over.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Maureen admires the crib in her nursery.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Marcus and Talon argue about the cleanliness of the table.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Sophia plays in front of the rocking chair.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Moribund shows up at Goody's house for Christmas to give his children<br>presents—the crib and the rocking chair.                                                                                                                                        |
| Veronica trips on the stairs, the glass lands impossibly.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Claudia is about to pull out the splinter when she hears a <i>thud</i> .<br>She sees that Peter's asleep.<br>She feels a gust of wind and closes the open windows. She stumbles over the leg of<br>the table. The ghost crawls down the hall behind her. |
| Sophia wants her lights turned off.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Faintnot lies on Marcus and Talon's table. She likes Talon.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Maureen hears a baby crying late at night.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Abigail walks up the stairs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| The Burned Man sneaks behind Dean as he finishes his draft.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Sleepwalking Wes wakes and gets out of bed. He returns with a knife and starts                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Franklin and Hamilton break their fingers.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Wes steps on the nail.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



Wes is admitted to the E.R.  
Andy sees Maureen in the hospital.  
Marcus and Talon's dishes break.  
Andy pulls Claudia's splinter.  
Andy researches the house; learns Lyle is dead.

**Lyle falls off the stairs.**

Andy hangs up.  
**Goody confronts Moribund about his childrens' deaths.**

Boondoggle's everywhere.  
Wes carves the tray table.  
Veronica has mysterious bruises.  
Andy calls Claudia.  
Claudia's phone falls under the end table.  
Claudia folds sheets.  
Andy leaves a voicemail.  
Claudia drops the sheet; ghost underneath.  
Claudia gets a knife; looks for phone.  
Andy calls Peter.

Peter closes the store.  
Peter closes the workshop.  
Andy sees Peter out the window.  
Peter drives home.  
Claudia finds her phone; is attacked.  
Claudia's terrorized in the bedroom; killed.

**Faintnot breaks it off.**  
**She runs, fights, escapes again, is caught.**  
**Moribund kills Faintnot.**

Marcus and Talon fight.  
Talon freaks out in the closet.

**Abigail confronts Moribund.**

Talon sees Marcus being dragged.  
Maureen vomits everywhere.  
Sophia breaks her ankle under toys.  
The guests notice Veronica's bruise.  
The nurses discover Wes's carvings.  
The burners flip on in Dean's apartment.  
Andy smells the gas, gets a call from the E.R.  
Peter finds Claudia's body.

**Abigail falls down the stairs.**

Andy pulls Wes out of the hospital.  
Maureen wants "her baby" back.  
Veronica's guests leave.  
Derrick accidentally holds Willful.  
Dean's fire alarm goes off.  
Dean's furniture barricades him in.

## **Appendix D: Outline and Pitch Notes on Potential Revision (Draft Two)**

Andie is the curator at a SoHo furniture design studio and she loves her job, but her home life is struggling due to the fact that her boyfriend Wes, has just been laid off from his architecture firm. To escape their worries, Andie's sister Claudia and her husband Peter invite them on a trip upstate to spend a weekend in a luxurious cabin.

Once they get there and discover that their reservations have been lost, the foursome have to spend the night in a 300 year-old unrenovated log cabin. At first, it seems everything's going downhill, but inside the cabin Andie discovers a small trove of gorgeous antique Puritan furniture. She gets the idea to bring it back to the city and sell it off in the store, knowing that her boss Serena will let her keep all the commission in exchange for bringing such exclusive pieces to the store.

Wes, who has been miserable since losing his job, is happy for Andie and supportive of her idea, but is strangely enthralled by the furniture. That night, Wes has trouble sleeping and takes a walk outside. In an old tool shed behind the house, he finds a worn axe with a long, curved handle—clearly by the same woodcarver as the furniture. Deciding to take it for his own, Wes secretively stashes the axe in the car. When he comes back inside, he's attacked by a ghost with nails hammered into him and possessed.

They take the furniture to the store and sell it off. Peter buys Claudia a banister for their townhouse, Serena buys a carved endtable, and an NYU dean buys a bureau for his young, new wife. Wes gets stranger and stranger, but his demeanor seems to improve as his passion for architecture is revitalized and he begins to draft a gorgeous, natural outdoor plaza. As a wedge is driven between Wes and Andie, she turns to her sister and her boss—only to find that they're not quite themselves either... Andie decides to look into the furniture's past and returns to Chestnut Hill to uncover the truth.

Simultaneously, there's a storyline set in 1700. Daniel Moribund, a plain carpenter disappears into the forest. Just as a search party is mounted, Moribund is returned by a local Indian tribe who claim to have found him in the forest—and say that Moribund refused to come back without the load of Chestnut wood he's dragging on his coat.

Almost immediately, Moribund begins to craft large and beautiful pieces of furniture and intricately carve them. He's become a master woodcarver seemingly overnight—and claims that his time lost in the forest gave him divine inspiration. He even offers to craft a new church for the village. Everyone is elated, save for Pastor Fowler, who grows ever more suspicious of Moribund, especially as he sees the woodcarver getting closer and closer with his teenage daughter, Faintnot.

Fowler decides to investigate Moribund's strange, new behavior and visits the Indian tribe that brought Moribund back. In the present, this is interwoven with Andie's own investigation. She returns to Chestnut Hill and learns of the Indian legend that Fowler is told firsthand by the tribe's chieftan. There's an ancient legend of a great, malevolent spirit that resides deep in the Chestnut forest—and of an Indian chief, centuries ago, who went into the forest and met with the spirit, who promised him eternal wealth in exchange for five human souls. The chieftan refused, and barely escaped the forest with his life. Fowler becomes convinced that Moribund went into the forest, visited with the demon, and accepted his offer.

In the present, Andie comes to believe that Wes has been possessed by Moribund's ghost—a spirit hellbent on completing the demon's ritual in exchange for the promise of wealth beyond measure. Andie searches for a way to free the trapped souls of her possessed friends, while in the past, Fowler works to stop Moribund before he can find his fifth and final victim. After Andie discovers that Fowler succeeded in the past, but died in the pursuit, she realizes that Moribund-possessed Wes still needs one last soul as a final sacrifice—hers.

REEL 1 – Intro Andie (at work), fired architect boyfriend Wes, wealthy sister Claudia, her husband Peter, and boss Serena. The couples head up north—end up staying in a run-down log cabin.

REEL 2 – They discover the furniture. Wes becomes possessed at night. They bring the furniture back to the store.

REEL 3 – They sell the furniture in the store. Claudia and Peter buy the banister and an NYU professor and his wife buy the bureau. After an accidental death, Serena ends up with the end table. The hauntings start—Abigail, Sarah Brady, and Faintnot. Possessed Wes starts acting strangely, more creative, and very inspired by the furniture.

REEL 4 – Andie turns to Claudia and Serena as her relationship with Wes is going sour. The professor's wife becomes possessed. Wes gifts Andie a lovely heart-shaped wooden amulet.

REEL 5 – Andie hears about the professor's wife going mad, and she starts to have several near-miss fatal accidents. That, coupled with everything else prompts Andie to investigate the furniture.

REEL 6 – Andie travels to Chestnut Hill to learn more about the furniture. Claudia and Serena become possessed.

REEL 7 – Andie returns to NYC, knowing she must destroy the furniture and stop Wes. She goes to Claudia's, but Claudia and the furniture are both gone. Wes calls her, frantic—the store is on fire.

REEL 8 – The ghosts have gathered in the store's workshop. Wes has started the fire, hoping to kill Andie and trap her spirit in the heart-shaped amulet. She tries to destroy the furniture, and despite attacks on all sides, she's successful.

-The 'wealth beyond measure' isn't money or physical wealth—it's wealth in ability. Moribund goes from plain and uninspiring to a master artist, just as Wes starts to become more talented and creative once he's possessed at the cabin.

-There was a Chestnut blight in America at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, wiping out 99% of Chestnut trees in America. In the world of the story, the supernatural explanation of the event was that God's wrath was vanquishing the demon. The reason that the demon lived in the forest in the first place was that, in the Bible, after Satan's defection from Heaven with the other fallen angels, they had to hide because God sent his armies after the fallen angels to punish them. This demon hid in the forest, and part of that Indian legend is that the Chestnut tree became the symbol of this fallen angel-turned-demon, and wherever the demon had stepped, a Chestnut tree sprouted. So the Chestnut blight was the final vanquishing of the

demon. The reason that this is relevant to the story is that these pieces of cursed Chestnut wood that Andie finds are the only last existing pieces of the demon—if they're destroyed, the demon is gone forever, but if Moribund completes the ritual, it will summon him back to Earth to continue his eternal torment. I don't know how much of that explanation will fit into the final story, because I want to keep the backstory brief, but I also want to be clear about what's happening and why it's happening.

-The ghosts are: Sarah Brady, Faintnot, Abigail, and Moribund. The reason that they're evil-spirited ghosts is because they've been killed and their spirits have been trapped in the demon-infested wood. I also thought that the three women would act as kind of a cult of ghosts around the central figure of Moribund. Kind of like Dracula's brides—just three women who loved him and would do his bidding.

-Andie: works as the curator for a furniture design studio owned by Serena Mercer

-Wes: Andie's boyfriend, a recently laid-off architect

-Claudia: Andie's older, wealthier sister

-Peter: Claudia's husband

-Serena: Andie's boss, owner of Design in the Raw

-Fowler becomes the protagonist in the 1700s.

-Serena buys the table after the original owner dies immediately (Serena's old death).

-Andie asks Wes if he wants to work in the workshop for Design in the Raw. At first he's offended, but he ends up taking the job so that he can be in a woodshop.

-Andie goes back up to Chestnut Hill at the end of the second act and returns to New York for the third.

-Wes becomes possessed when he discovers Moribund's hammer—a secret he hides from Andie, leaving her to wonder what's happening with him.

-Wes saves the scraps from Peter and Claudia's banister and crafts Andie a small, heart-shaped amulet from the demon wood.

-They have to destroy the furniture before the ritual is complete. Once all five souls have been trapped, the wood becomes useless and the demon is summoned—if all five souls become trapped, there's nothing they can do. Destroying the wood is the only way to be safe forever. Fowler stopped the ritual from being completed by denying Moribund's gift and Moribund dying without trapping all five souls—but he didn't stop it fully. The furniture was kept intact, ensuring that the ritual could be completed at a later time.

-Fowler's immediately suspicious, but the town wants a new church. Fowler researches the wood and follows Moribund and refuses the small gift that Moribund gives him, but falls prey in the end.

-Fowler was given a piece of furniture but he destroyed it, thus avoiding his soul being trapped inside. Then Andie realizes that she has to destroy the furniture in order to save her loved ones.

-I'm still working on the logistics of the third act, but I want it to still revolve around a fire in the past and the present. I want Fowler to realize that the church is being

built as a temple to this demon instead of to God, so he burns it down. Similarly, I want Andie to destroy the furniture, perhaps by collecting it back in the store and setting the store on fire, or whether it might climax with a fire in their apartment, like in the first draft.

-I don't know if this will work, but I also want to see if I can bring in something about how the history of Chestnut Hill has painted Pastor Fowler in a bad light—as he was the one who burned down the church. So that when Andie's investigating, the truth as we know it is in the 1700s isn't entirely clear to her in the present.

-The possession order of the women will be the same—their deaths very similar (a modern update) to the deaths of the past. "A body is dead without a soul inside it. To become possessed, first the living soul must be killed so that the disembodied soul may inhabit it fully."

| The Sacrifices | Haunted By       | Piece of Furniture | The Five Souls |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <b>Wes</b>     | Moribund         | Moribund's Axe     | The Disciple   |
| <b>Claudia</b> | Abigail Moribund | Banister           | The Wife       |
| <b>Serena</b>  | Sarah Brady      | End Table          | The Crone      |
| <b>Emeline</b> | Faintnot         | Bureau             | The Child      |
| Andy           | -                | Heart Amulet       | The ...        |
| Fowler         | -                | Cross              | -              |

## Appendix E: Final Outline for Revision (Draft Two)

### REEL 1

Newly-graduated design student Andrea starts her job as a secretary to older, famed architect Wes Jacobs. He's in the boardroom, presenting a new, massive skyscraper—his biggest project ever. When he meets Andrea, it's love at first sight.

Three years later, they're still dating, and she's three days away from opening her own furniture design studio. As a surprise, Wes takes Andrea upstate and shows her a 10-acre piece of land he's bought. On the land sits a 300-year old log cabin mansion, a remnant of the Puritan settlers of the area. And in the backyard, a twisted, rickety old spire—some sort of observation tower. "So they could tell when the Indians were coming?" Wes and Andrea make their best guess.

Wes shows Andrea his plans—to demolish the log cabin and build a dream home he's designed for her. She's overjoyed, but asks him to spend a night with her in the log cabin—"One night. We owe it at least that before we tear it down."

He agrees. They enter the old, creepy home, and discover a treasure trove of antique Puritan furniture. Andrea can't believe their good luck—she'll take the furniture back and sell it in her store.

Romance is in the air between them, distracting Wes from picking up calls from his architecture firm and distracting Andrea from the strange, shadowy figures lurking in the shadows...

They decide to go out to the observation tower and climb it together. In the empty base of the tower sits a cobwebby workbench and some rusty tools...and an incredible, carved drafting table.

They start climbing. It's dangerous—a little scary, a little rickety. "This'll be the first thing to go when we get that bulldozer out here," Wes promises, but at the top of the tower, the view is breathtaking. They can see for a hundred miles—the lush, dark forest stretching out across the land and over the distant mountaints.

In the small room at the top of the tower sits one last, unfinished piece—a headboard, carved with the exquisite forest view. Andrea laments: it's a shame it was never finished.

Wes's phone rings again and he finally takes the call from his work, only to learn that his firm has been bought out. The company that bought the firm doesn't want internal conflict, i.e. Wes competing for projects with their own star architects. So he's fired. And his skyscraper is put on hold—indefinitely.

That night Wes can't sleep. The door to the observation tower bangs in the wind. He goes outside to shut it, and is distracted by strange noises coming from the forest. He heads into the woods and disappears for the night.

### REEL 2

Andrea wakes up, alone. She searches for Wes, finally finding him trying to drag the drafting table out to the car. They hire a truck and bring the furniture back to the store.

The opening of Andrea's store is a big event—Wes's high-brow architecture contacts and former colleagues are all there, as are the city's wealthiest art collectors, including the famously ruthless Serena Mercer.

Andrea's younger sister Claudia shows up to support her with her fiancé Peter—they've just gotten engaged! As an engagement present, Peter buys Claudia the antique bureau.

After a fierce bidding war, Serena Mercer loses her coveted end table to another wealthy buyer.

As attempted reparations for Wes's sudden dismissal, his old boss, Derrick Pritchett, the head of the firm, buys a rocking chair for his young, foolish wife Morgan.

Wes is there, but in a noticeably darker mood—seemingly because all night he's forced to hear shallow 'sorry's from Andrea's wealthy, well-connected clientele—he *was* a part of that inner circle, but not anymore.

To cheer him up, Andrea gives Wes the drafting table, hoping it'll keep him inspired. On the backside of the drafting table, Andrea notices a name "D.A. MORIBUND," and wonders if that's the craftsman, but she's soon distracted when...

The winner of the end table oversees its' being packed into the back of his car, when he's CRUSHED to death in a freak auto accident. The end table is completely unharmed. Serena Mercer steps up and offers to buy it on the spot.

### REEL 3

Wes moves the drafting table into his study in his and Andrea's Manhattan penthouse apartment. From their windows, they can clearly see the under-construction skyscraper that was supposed to be Wes's signature on the NYC skyline. It's only half-done—long sheets of tarp siding covering the unfinished walls.

As Wes and Andrea look out at the skyscraper, Wes tells her that he's going to take some time off work and really get back to his love for architecture—sketching and drafting. Is it okay if their dream house is put on hold for the moment? Of course, she replies.

The rest of the furniture pieces are moved into place in their new homes.

Claudia invites Andrea over for a girl's night. They drink wine and sift through bridal magazines. Andrea's a little quieter than normal—Claudia apologizes if it seems like she's throwing her impending nuptials in Andrea's face, after all, Andrea is 3+ years into her seemingly perfect relationship, and no ring.

No, nothing like that, Andrea says, she's just worried about Wes—he's seemed off the past few days, spending a lot of time alone. Claudia thinks that's only to be expected.

Andrea leaves. Claudia's alone...or is she? She investigates a strange noise...

Night falls across the city, and the ghosts of the past come out to play. After being terrorized, Serena is killed by the ghost of an old woman.

Meanwhile, Andrea's store is flourishing. As she's closing up shop, Serena Mercer comes in. Andrea greets her warmly, but Serena's acting incredibly strange. Hunched and draped in unfashionable clothes, she begs Andrea to tell her where she got the furniture. Andrea pretends not to remember the name of the town, but it's upstate, in a house on the land they bought—there's no more. Serena asks to know what happened to the rest of the furniture...as if she hadn't been there. She seems almost senile.

Andrea starts getting scared. Wes comes in and immediately diffuses the situation by offering to take Serena home. In the store's register, Andrea finds the scrap of paper she had written the craftsmans' name on, "MORIBUND." She starts to wonder...

#### REEL 4

Wes's former boss Derrick and his wife Morgan have a big fight. He ends up sleeping on the couch...and is haunted and then killed by the ghost of a beautiful young Pilgrim girl. When Morgan comes out to investigate the ruckus, she finds her husband dead, and the ghost attacks her—killing and possessing her. Just as Serena 'became' the old woman, so does Morgan become the seductive girl ghost.

At home alone that night, Andrea tries to research Moribund, discovering that a man named Moribund did build the home and own that property in the early 1700s, but she's soon distracted when she's terrorized by the massive, dark shadow of a hulking ghost. She doesn't know what she's seeing, and thinking she's going crazy, she locks herself in the bedroom. Almost immediately, the thing outside starts claiming that it's Wes. She doesn't know what to believe. Finally, she opens the door. It is Wes, who apologizes for being so late—he's just got home.

Then, out the window, they see it...the half-completed skyscraper in FLAMES. The tarp siding is on fire, billowing in the wind. It's an incredible sight. Wes and Andrea watch, in complete disbelief. Wes is shocked and upset, but Andrea reserves her suspicions...

#### REEL 5

Stuff about Morgan missing, Derek killed. Fight. Bankrupt company—only asset left was the skyscraper and now that's gone.

Andrea is horrified. Wes acting this way, and another of her customers dead, or somehow seemingly missing. Now she *has* to get to the bottom of this. But first, she has to warn Claudia.

Andrea calls and calls, even going over to Claudia and Peter's place and leaving a note, but no one's home. Claudia is, of course, out shopping. She's a fashion buyer and she loves what she does.

Andrea decides she has to go back up Chestnut Hill and figure this out once and for all... She sneaks into Wes's study to take the key to the log cabin, and on the drafting table, she discovers a set of plans for a *new* skyscraper—one to replace the one that burned down.

It's familiar looking...an old design brought to modern times...a massive steel and glass recreation of Moribund's observation tower.

Up in Chestnut Hill, Andrea goes up to the house. She checks out the house. Nothing strange or unusual. She's about to leave when she hears the observation tower's door blowing in the wind, banging against the wall. She goes to close it...then decides to climb it on a whim. She sighs when she reaches the top—nothing's there. Wait. *Nothing's there*. The headboard is gone.



## REEL 6

She drives back through town, noticing a small building in town—a Historical Society. She stops, hoping they'll have some records about the property.

But they have much more than that... She asks about Moribund. The clerk pulls out hand-written transcripts of a court case: The Trial of Abigail Moribund.

Confused, Andrea pours through the records, transcribed by the county justice who presided over the trial. She learns about Abigail Moribund, who was tried as a witch and a devil-worshipper in 1700. She killed her husband with an axe, and was caught in the act. She was then implicated in three other unsolved murders—that of her mother-in-law, her child, and that of her husband's mistress. Her husband, Daniel Moribund, was the town's woodcarver, and a citizen in good standing. She claimed that Moribund was trying to summon a terrible demon—well-known in local Indian legend—and that he made special pieces of furniture for his victims to trap their souls when they died.

Since he was a woodcarver, and had therefore made many pieces of furniture for many people in the village—and nothing horrible had happened to them—she was deemed insane and burned at the stake for her horrible deeds.

Andrea searches the records for any other mention of a Moribund. There's only one—only a few months before Abigail's trial and burning, Daniel Moribund was lost in the forest for two weeks. There's an old record of his return, and a joyous celebration in his honor. His wife was overjoyed at his return. Moribund is quoted as saying that he planned to build an observation tower out over the forest, so that no man would get lost again.

Concurrently to Andrea's discovery of all this, Claudia returns home. She's stalked by a beautiful, seductive young ghost and then killed and possessed. Peter returns home at an inopportune moment, and Claudia kills him.

Andrea furiously drives home. She calls Claudia...and Claudia picks up. Andrea tells her to get out, to destroy the bureau—anything. Claudia asks her to calm down, hardly able to understand. Andrea says she's coming to get her—she just has to stop at home and get some clothes and money, then they're *leaving*.

## REEL 7

Andrea returns home, terrified, ready to bolt. But Wes is home—he's been waiting for her, with a lavish meal...and a present. He's loving and sweet, like the old Wes. But is it a trap? Andrea's torn—maybe she was just making everything up, maybe she's gone crazy. Maybe *Abigail* went crazy. Maybe it's all just in her mind...

Wes apologizes for the way he's been acting—he's just been down about losing his job—and he brings her into the bedroom to show her something...

The headboard. On their bed. Completed. The carving finished.

She tries to run, but he grabs her and holds her at knife-point. He tells her to say that the headboard is hers—to claim it. Forever. She tearfully, reluctantly agrees.

He knocks her out.

She wakes, tied up. Wes is driving her back upstate. In the trunk of their SUV, the writhing, bound, distorted bodies of the possessed dead—Serena, Morgan...and Claudia. Andrea bursts into tears at the sight.

They arrive at the house. One by one, Wes leads the possessed up to the top of the observation tower. Then Andrea. The dead snap at her heels like ravenous dogs—she kicks them away. Wes addresses the demon of the forest: “We offer these bodies as sacrifices to you, and this tower as your sanctuary so that you may be the purveyor of all your kingdom.” Andrea realizes: he’s going to build the skyscraper as sanctuary to the demon, so that it may be purveyor of all its’ kingdom. That is, all of New York City. Andrea confronts Wes about his plan.

But Wes advances, wielding Moribund’s axe. Andrea’s hands are bound, but she runs to the window and elbows out the glass. She climbs up on the windowsill, trying to measure the jump. Can she make it? Wes watches, amused. Then lunges—PUSHING her out the window.

## REEL 8

She falls. Hard. Wes watches from the window, hoping she’s dead, so at long last Moribund’s ritual will be complete. Andrea doesn’t move for a long time, but finally stirs. She’s in bad shape: her ankle snapped and her shoulder dislocated.

She stands, woozy. Wes tries to rush downstairs, the possessed trying to follow. He’s distracted for a minute as he attempts to keep them in the tower. With her dislocated shoulder, Andrea painfully twists her bound hands around to her front and unties the rope with her teeth. She drags herself over to the tower and throws her shoulder back into place, then hides in the shadowy base of the tower among the cobwebby, ancient tools.

Wes races downstairs, wielding his axe. He searches for Andrea. Thinking she’s gone into the woods, he heads in. Meanwhile, possessed Claudia manages to break down the door at the top of the stairs. She and the other possessed women make their way down the stairs, ferocious—their evil spirits want Moribund to succeed! Andrea fights them off as she tries to make a FIRE, finally succeeding.

She races out, trapping the possessed women inside. They start screeching and screaming. Wes/Moribund returns, absolutely furious. He starts after Andrea.

She races to the car and tries to start it up. Wes comes after her. The observation tower is fully on fire. Creaking, it tips over and SLAMS into the house, tearing through the roof. Now the house is on fire. Wes/Moribund is torn—it’s *his* house! He and Andrea fight savagely to the death, but in the end, she claims victory. The killing blow comes from Moribund’s axe itself—as it did 300 years ago. She gets in the car and drives away, leaving the wreckage behind her burning, burning, burning...

1 YEAR LATER: Andrea throws wood on the fireplace. It is instantly engulfed in flames. She ascends a long staircase and looks out of a large picture window...over the massive, dense forest.

She’s in her new house—the house Wes designed for her. She’s tougher, older, wiser, but all alone. Night falls. A furious wind tears through the trees—the forest howls.

## Appendix F: A Selection of Hand-Written Notes (Draft Three)

GOODY? → SHE CLEAVES HIS FACE  
CAUGHT, THEY NAIL  
HER TO THE TREE.

ABIGAIL

DANIEL FURNITURE LIVES.

FAINTNOT

FOWLER

① MORIBUND COMES OUT OF FOREST

② MORIBUND BREAKS UP W/ ABIGAIL  
↓ SPENDS ALL TIME IN CELLAR.

③ DISSEMINATING FURNITURE  
PEOPLE START DYING

④ ABIGAIL CONFRONTS  
MORIBUND BLAMES HER - WITCH! ←  
GOODY BELIEVES HER - KIDS KILLED.  
ABI. BURNS DOWN TOWN  
MORIB. HAS ALREADY SAVED FURNITURE

WORKBENCH

BUREAU

DESK

CHAIR (ROCKING?)

DINING ROOM TABLE

HADLEY JAMES

SERENA ~~LUELLA~~

ANDREA

WES

MADDIE ~~HELESA~~

STACY ✓ CLAUDIA

PETER

SYLVIA

FURNITURE  
TURNING  
TOWN EVIL



## WOODWORK

puts cracks in peoples' souls

2 couples opening a design  
store in NYC

more past?

- headboard
- architect's desk
- end table
- bureau
- rocking chair
- crib
- lantern

made the axe to kill &  
trap Abigail's  
soul w/ the  
rest of them

- axe

Moribund  
Abigail

- HOW DOES ANDREA DISCOVER  
THAT THE EVIL SPIRIT IS ABIGAIL?
- HOW DOES THIS AFFECT THE STORY?
- MORIBUND TRYING TO KILL ANDY  
B/C SHE'S THE ABIGAIL?

Andrea  
Wes

~~Abigail~~ Steph  
Peter

I

ANDY & WES BREAK UP  
FIND FURNITURE/GET IT  
STORE'S DOING BAD

II

GHOSTS COME OUT... Wes decides to stay  
on cotin workshop...

PUTTING TENSIONS ON ALL CHARA.

RELATIONS UNTIL... Then needs an apt.

STORE CLOSES... stab... Andy thinks he  
has a new girl... Wes

ANDY'S ALONE HAS TO FIGURE THIS OUT HERSELF' thinks  
Andy's

REALIZES DANGER, RUSHES TO STOP AUCTION stalking him.

III

TOO LATE. SHE'S THROWN IN JAIL.



## FR: ABIGAIL'S PERSPECTIVE

INT. CHESTNUT HILL - DAY - 1700

Men gather at the edge of the deep forest. The women wait inside their door frames, whispering amongst themselves.

A grouping of wooden houses and a small, ramshackle church make up the village of CHESTNUT HILL.

Dressed in stark blacks, whites, and browns, the villagers cut a familiar image--Puritans.

MAYOR AARON GOODY (45, large) leads everyone.

MAYOR GOODY

Four men to a group, and we meet back before sunset. Come right back if you find him. William, take down west to the river.

He directs PASTOR JOHN FOWLER (30, earnest).

MAYOR GOODY (CONT'D)

Fowler, take all east down to Hawthorne's Glen. The rest of you--

A child hanging in a doorway pulls on his mother's skirts.

CHILD

Mama, look!

A murmur grows within the crowd. Men turn their heads, squinting to see--

DANIEL MORIBUND (41), broad-shouldered and square-jawed, lumbering out of the forest, dragging something behind him.

WOMAN

Lord, he's come back! Beth, go fetch Mrs. Abigail.

BETH, a young teen, slips out the back door, and runs.

Moribund, bedraggled, and with an overgrown beard, looks up to see the entire village staring at him, stunned to silence.

Pastor Fowler steps out of the crowd, holding out his hands.

Moribund tightens his grip on what he's dragging--a load of raw wood piled on his coat.

PASTOR FOWLER

A Lamb of God we thought lost from our flock has returned home.

The roll-up loading dock door is open, letting in the light.

Striking, wiry WES (24) operates the machinery, goggles securely in place over his unruly hair.

WES

Wes! Wes!

The saw dies. The halo of sawdust around him settles. Wes looks up, pulling off his goggles.

WES

Hey, beauty queen.

ANDY

(blushes)  
Hey, yourself. I thought we were ready to go.

WES

Thought I might as well get some work done, you never know how long it'll take Claudia to--

BEEP! BEEP! A car horn cuts him off. A black Escalade pulls into the loading dock.

The sunglasses-clad blonde passenger, CLAUDIA (30), reaches across the driver's seat to honk the horn again. She waves, flashing a dazzling smile.

WES (CONT'D)

Like, I said, you never know.

Andy walks over and leans in Claudia's open window.

ANDY

Happy two-year, guys.

PETER

Thanks, Andy.

PETER (33), the driver of the Escalade, takes Claudia's hand and kisses it. The diamond on her wedding band gleams.

Wes walks past, laden with bags.

WES

Can you pop it, Pete?

Peter obliges, and slides out to help Wes.

ANDY

I'm going to close up.

## DRAFT #1

ABIGAIL

Daniel! Daniel!

A woman runs through the street, tall and beautiful ABIGAIL MORIBUND (37). She flings her arms around her husband, having lost all sense of the grim decorum that the other women have.

For the first time, Moribund shows some semblance of recognition, and mechanically embraces his wife.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Where did you go, Daniel? I feared the worst all these nights.

He cups her face in one hand, and turns to Pastor Fowler.

DANIEL MORIBUND

I walked into the Kingdom of the Lord, and there found treasures.

He motions to the wood on his coat--rich CHESTNUT TIMBER. Fowler is startled by the confession. Goody furrows his brow.

INT. DESIGN IN THE RAW - DAY - NEW YORK CITY - PRESENT

A SoHo-chic interior design studio. The showrooms feature dining sets, bar tables, and executive-sized desks.

The places are beautifully restored and artfully displayed. But it's nothing you couldn't find anywhere else--even right down the street.

ANDY (24)

(into phone)

We'll be back on Monday...Top.

check in hand. I promise it won't be late this month...Okay, bye.

A faint WEINER picks up. Andy hangs up and listens. She walks over to a DOOR set into the back wall, and opens it.

INT. DESIGN IN THE RAW WORKSHOP - DAY

The high-pitched drone intensifies as a NOISE SAW tears through a board.

It's an extensive workshop with tools hanging on the walls and lumber stacked in the corner behind cans of paint.

A/W fighting, store on its last legs--when P/C arrive for trip. Have to be lovey dovey.

Andy walks back into the store.

The men stuff the luggage in back between Claudia's designer bags.

WES

You're sure you want me and Andy to come with you guys?

PETER

Of course. I love Andy like a sister.

Wes reaches into his pocket, pulling out a small, black box.

WES

Or like a star-in-law?

He pops the box to reveal a small, but sparkling DIAMOND RING.

Peter laughs, pulling his brother into a bear hug.

PETER

I'm so happy for you, Wes.

Wes stashes the ring box inside a small toiletries bag.

WES

I can't wait to find the perfect moment this weekend to ask her.

INT. DESIGN IN THE RAW - DAY

Andy weaves her way through the furniture in the showroom. She locks the door and flips the sign so it reads CLOSED.

WES

Ready for a luxurious weekend?

Andy turns back--Wes leans against the door frame to the workshop, going lovingly at his girlfriend. She walks over to him and he takes her in his arms.

ANDY

Like you wouldn't believe.

(beat)

Are you sure we can afford it?

WES

I've been saving for months, and it's still the cheapest vacation money can buy. We're going. I want to treat you to something special.

\*furniture in cellar?

fighting

Wes tries to back out, but couples' trip!!

Claud offers to pay-- embar. A/W into going--had reservations for months

## Appendix G: Outline of Backstory (Draft Three)

Moribund returns from the woods and wants to build a church. Abigail is suspicious, as is Mayor Goody. This new action attracts the attention of Pastor Fowler...as well as his seductress of a teenage daughter Faintnot. As Moribund builds the church, (at Moribund's house, so Abigail can overhear) Goody lets Moribund know he can see right through him; he's *evil*: Abigail and Moribund have been growing further apart, and Moribund is having an affair with Faintnot. He did give her a bureau, after all. In a "show of good will," Moribund makes a rocking chair for Goody's goody-two-shoes Jr. of a son. The kid contracts polio and dies. Goody has a heart attack at the kid's funeral, even falling in the grave. Abigail becomes terrified, even more and more convinced there's something wrong with her husband. Then he gives her the dining room table. Things take a violent turn with Faintnot as well, just as the church completes construction. The night before it's due to open for church on Sunday, Faintnot pisses off Moribund a bit too much... She falls down the stairs and breaks her neck. But survives, her head lolling sickly. Moribund finishes her off with the butt of the axe, crushing her skull. Abigail catches Moribund with Faintnot's dead body. He claims she fell down the stairs. She discovers that he is lying, and killed Faintnot himself. He locks Abigail in the cellar with the body. She goes insane down there (because Faintnot's ghost comes to haunt her? Because she's *that* terrified of the furniture?). Moribund heads to church in the morning, and securely closes the door behind him? Things seem to be falling apart for Moribund... Faintnot is missing. And where's Abigail anyway? Fowler—too late—realizes he made a big mistake with Moribund. The man is evil. And they're sitting in his evil church. Fowler's about to tell everyone—and Moribund might be about to kill him in front of everyone... Abigail uses the axe to break out of the cellar, run to the church and sees Moribund barricade the doors and set the church ablaze. Abigail cleaves his face in half. Fowler is terribly burned, and twenty-six people are killed inside. Fowler exits to see Abigail over Moribund's dead body. She did the right thing—but he collapses and dies, unable to ever tell anyone. The rest of the town lynches her as a witch, nailing her to the tree with a single nail for every person she killed—including Fowler, including Faintnot's dead body found in her house, including her evil husband.

## Appendix H: Final Short Outline of Revision (Draft Three)

Couple-on-the-rocks Wes and Andrea own a furniture/design store together. The main tensions in their relationship revolve around the fact that their store is failing after only a few years. We can tell that Wes is on the side of folding the store and staring over. Andrea's dream was to open this store, so she wants to hold on and make it through together. They're pinned down by an enormous debt—so for now, it seems they'll have to keep mudding through, though they're digging themselves into a deeper and deeper hole...

To get away for a bit, they (somewhat reluctantly) head upstate with Andrea's sister Claudia and her husband Peter. During the night's stay in a 300 year-old cabin, Andrea and Wes discover an old workshop in the cellar of the house...and a veritable treasure trove of priceless antique Puritan furniture. After some debate, they decide to bring the furniture back to sell in their store. Will this be the end of their troubles?

Once the furniture is back in NYC, Wes and Andrea think things may be looking up...but the trouble is just beginning. Wes restores one of the pieces and it attracts attention immediately. A wealthy art collector buys it up, offering to take the pieces to an exclusive auction. Hadley sells the auction as a very small, very elite thing. The collection is so small and so finely curated... Andrea refuses—the store could use the publicity. The divide is put back up between Wes and Andrea. They begin fighting again. That night, Wes sleeps in the workshop.

With Wes downstairs and Andrea upstairs, there appears to be a break-in at the store. Window smashed, furniture strangely rearranged... Andrea races downstairs to find Wes missing. The cops arrive. So does Wes, dazed, confused, and thinking *Andrea* was the one to cause the chaos in the store.

They head to the police station to file a report—neither of them really knowing what the hell is going on. Which doesn't make the police very happy.

Hadley the art collector is tortured in her apartment by the furniture she's bought—Goody's horrible polio-stricken kid. We think she'll die...but she survives the night. We probably don't want to know that until later? How can you make it a funny cutaway...and then she's alive. Like, she hides in the closet...and falls asleep. The next time we see her, it's morning. (But that's later)

Wes and Andrea head to the police station to file a report. Discuss value of furniture with cops. Under questioning, Andrea will start to wonder if Wes caused the destruction in the store...perhaps even to put the final nail in the coffin and shut the store down for good. (Cop: "Is there any reason your boyfriend would want to do this himself? I know you said you two were fighting...") The cops don't know who to believe. Both their stories have holes—the entire thing seems strange and improbable. The seed is planted in Andrea's head... What if Wes did this? ...What if he did it to put the final nail in its coffin and shut the store down for good? Vogel shows up, is furious. Uh-oh. ☹

Hadley wakes. She's alive! Was it all just a dream? Who the fuck cares! Get this rocking chair away from me! She orders around the doorman loading it into the taxi. The taxi, meanwhile, is blocking the street(?) A lot of cars are getting pissed. Hadley dies when a car jumps the sidewalk and smashes her against the wall (and destroys the rocking chair? Ugh...this scene)



On their way out of the station in the morning, the cops recommend that Wes and Andrea don't keep the furniture in the store. Their insurance doesn't cover it. So the furniture is disseminated. To keep up with their debts, the desk (and the Burned Man) go to Vogel. The bureau (and Faintnot) are taken by Claudia. Wes will keep the workbench (and Moribund) locked in the workshop. Andrea moves the dining room table upstairs. They learn of Hadley's death...and that she was on her way to *return* the rocking chair. It's nerve-shaking.

Wes brings up the auction again...if they can't have the furniture in the store, how can they sell it? And if they're not selling it, they're getting no income as they have to fix up the store after the break-in (and they're already in a heap of debt). They're fighting again—it gets the worst it's gotten. Wes thinks Andrea's being unreasonable.

He'll stay in the workshop again tonight to make sure everything is okay down there. (Andrea: "You mean like it was all okay last time?" Wes: "What are you implying?" ...That we still don't know what happened in the break-in, and Andrea thinks Wes might have had something to do with it) Reaching a fever pitch, she walks away from the conversation when it looks like he might get violent. (Andrea: "You know what—you stay. I'll leave.") He apologizes after her—she doesn't want to hear it.

Andrea turns to Claudia, but doesn't tell her about Wes almost turning violent. She focuses on the specifics of their argument. Claudia hates to say it...but the furniture should go to auction, and maybe it *is* time to shut down the store.

Pissed that no one is on her side, Andrea goes to learn more about this furniture that seems to making things difficult... She returns to town to learn more, discovering Chestnut Hill's claim to fame is being home to NY's only executed witch.. The story seems to be that Abigail Moribund was nailed to a tree after burning down the new church her furnituremaker husband built, killing her husband (by cleaving his face open), and her husband's mistress. A few details in the story convince Andrea that *they have Moribund's furniture*. She thinks there's more than meets the eye to this, though... Andrea returns to the cabin to spend the night there. (She goes in the cellar, and even though nothing supernatural happens, she sees where XYZ happens—axe marks in cellar door?)

Meanwhile, Vogel calls the shop and tells Wes that their insurance rates are going through the roof. It's coming out of their rent. Vogel is also preoccupied by a strange splinter he's acquired from the desk.

Claudia receives her bruises that night and Faintnot sleep-seduces Peter—here we see how Faintnot died (with a fakeout where Abigail confronts Faintnot when she first arrives? So we wonder if Abigail really did it...then we find out she didn't and--) See Moribund kill Faintnot. Then we see Abigail find out and Moribund locks her in the cellar. She goes insane down there. Transition to: Andrea's having a peaceful night in Chestnut Hill—the place is no longer haunted. Instead, WES is tormented by Abigail's spirit and accidentally puts his foot through a framing nail.

In the morning of 1699, it's time for church. Fowler, for the first time, finally becomes suspicious of Moribund... Faintnot is missing. Abigail's nowhere to be seen. Of course, Abigail is locked in the cellar. She finds the strength to find/get the axe

(from Faintnot's body? Crushed skull with the butt of the axe?) Moribund claims he'll go find Abigail...

And neither is Wes, when Andrea arrives home. He's at the hospital for his foot. She asks him what happened. It only confirms her new theory: there's something wrong with the furniture. Wes thinks she's crazy. She thinks Wes is crazy. There's something wrong with the furniture? Yes. Didn't you see it yourself when the store was broken into? When you followed...nothing out into the street? When all the furniture was moved? But what are you trying to get me to believe...that it's haunted? Wes thinks the store is too much stress on Andrea. No, no—they can handle the store. The store's not the problem—(the ghosts are!). Wes agrees. It's not the store. It's them. They have to break up. He knows it's a bad time...but it's been coming for a while. And he just can't do it anymore. ("I stepped on a nail—it was an accident. Not proof of the supernatural." "Wes! You said yourself, it was sitting face-up on the floor. Where the hell would a nail come from?!" "Well, we do own a furniture store.")

Andrea, convinced that the furniture has turned Wes bad, rushes out—ready to destroy it all. Wes, unable to rush after her this second, calls Peter and tells him that he and Andrea broke up and he thinks she's going to hurt herself or the furniture or the store—can he pick up Wes so they can go check on her? Sure thing. Peter leaves Claudia. It'll be a fatal mistake.

On her way back to the store, Andrea calls Claudia. No answer. Suddenly extremely worried, Andrea steers out and makes her way to Claudia.

\*(Cut to: Abigail breaking out of the cellar. Moribund tells Fowler he'll go get Abigail to prove there's nothing wrong. Fowler feels worse and worse about the whole thing. Abigail gets out of the cellar—Moribund's not there, even though we think he will be. Moribund's busy barricading the door, and he sets it aflame. He steps back and watches his work. )

Vogel pulls out the splinter. It's eight inches long. Disgusting. He drops it on the ground in horror. Like a shred of tinder, it goes up in flames.

With Peter gone, Faintnot makes her move on Claudia as dusk falls. Sheets dance, down the throat, around the throat, and fall down the stairs. Andrea finds Claudia's body and is terrified.

Wes and Peter arrive at the store just as the fire is picking up. People start to notice. Peter looks for Andrea in the workshop. Wes rushes up to the apartment. She's not there. But the axe is. He hears banging from upstairs. Vogel's trapped up there.

Wes goes up there and smashes the door with the axe only to find that the banging isn't Vogel. Vogel's dead. The banging is the DESK, against the door, trying to escape the fire. Wes faces the Burning Man. Chops the desk for firewood. It burns. The Burning Man is gone.

Meanwhile, Peter faces Abigail...and dies (how???). Andrea runs past the firemen and goes inside, just in time to find Peter dead. And to see Wes returning with the axe. He sees her with Peter's dead body. They each think the other did it. And no one knows how the apartment building caught on fire. No matter what, though, Wes isn't going to attack with an axe. Fuck that! Andrea totally would.

She grabs the axe. They fight around the dining room table. Fighting Wes at the climax, instead of the ghosts. Wes gets his face split open on the table. Andrea goes bezerkers. Is Andrea the one who's crazy—just like Abigail. Wes: "I'm not Moribund! And you're not Abigail—they're turning us against each other."

Abigail shows up. Abigail seems to mostly be going after Wes. The fire starts to spread downstairs. The ceiling collapses, falling and cracking the table. Abigail seems to disappear. Andrea and Wes now know it's neither of them. It *was* the furniture. If they don't work together, they'll end up like Moribund and Abigail. The furniture drove them both mad. Now all they have to do is destroy the workbench.

Back in the workshop, Moribund uses all his supernatural strength to keep them from defeating him and getting to the workbench...including the axe FLYING out of their hands and into his. Oh shit! The ceiling above the shop begins to collapse as well. Everything in the store is taken out. And the dining room table falls through the ceiling—broken, twisted, smoking, burned... ABIGAIL fallen right on top of it. She rises, ready to get her final retribution on her evil husband. (Flicking nails into him?) But split-face Wes earns her ire as well—("that's the witch?!") he tries to destroy the table first because he thinks Abigail is the witch. Abigail gains the upper hand by grabbing the axe—but then Wes destroys the table and she disappears (her wounds bleed and reopen). Andrea quickly grabs the axe, taking up Abigail's post and sinking the axe into Moribund's head wound. ...Nothing. Moribund reaches up and pulls out the axe sickly. She has to destroy the workbench. How could she have forgotten?! But of course, just in time to save Andrea, Wes DESTROYS the workbench. Andrea can't believe she isn't dead. In the midst of the fire, they embrace. And *kiss*. As they head for the exit, axe still in Andrea's hand, Wes turns back "I still want to break up." She's...floored. Anger coursing through her, Andy raises the axe with a scream and CUT TO BLACK.

After credits, Faintnot's bureau is at a spectacular auction, the only surviving piece from the tragedy. It has a LOT of attention. Sits in the middle of a lavish stage all alone. The auctioneer gets things started, when—cut to black. CREAKKKKK.